



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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news digest

96-1420D

Church settles suits against former treasurer who admitted to embezzlement

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning announced March 22 that the Episcopal Church has reached an agreement to settle the church's civil suits against former treasurer Ellen Cooke and her husband, Nicholas.

In January 1995 the church discovered financial irregularities and confronted Mrs. Cooke, who had resigned earlier as treasurer at the request of the presiding bishop. A subsequent audit contended that she had embezzled \$2.2 million. She pleaded guilty in January at a federal court hearing in Newark and will be sentenced April 29.

Browning released an announcement agreed to by both parties and contained in the settlement itself:

"The church has reached an agreement with Ellen F. Cooke to resolve all claims the church has against Mrs. Cooke. The agreement settles all claims between the church and Mrs. Cooke, and related claims asserted against her husband, Nicholas T. Cooke, III. The agreement includes transfer by Mr. and Mrs. Cooke to the church of substantially all of their liquid assets valued at approximately \$100,000 and delivery to the church of tangible personal property of the church of which Mrs. Cooke had been in possession. The terms of the agreement will not be further publicized, but the church is satisfied that the settlement is in the church's best interest under all the circumstances of this case."

Browning told the House of Bishops at its recent meeting in Kanuga that he is convinced that "we are near the end of this long and painful experience." The church's insurance company paid a claim of \$1 million and the Cookes turned over to the church two "valuable pieces of real estate," Browning said.

The church is pursuing "additional lines of potential recovery" that do not involve the Cookes, according to Browning, and he said that he would report on the results to the bishops at their fall meeting.

96-1421D

Bishops energized about full communion with Lutherans--and fight against racism

(ENS) For the fifth time, the bishops of the Episcopal Church met in closed session in an attempt to build a sense of community--and this time they emerged with renewed energy on two crucial issues, full communion with the Lutherans and a deeper commitment to fight the sin of racism.

"It was a lot of hard work over the years to get to this point--but we are now seeing the fruit of those labors," said Bishop Charles Keyser, suffragan for the Armed Forces, referring to a contentious meeting at the General Convention in 1991 that led to the annual gatherings at Kanuga Conference Center in North Carolina.

"We are different because of the presiding bishop's determination that we shape a community," said Bishop Jane Dixon of Washington during interviews at the conclusion of the week-long meeting in early March.

In a letter issued March 13 the bishops said, "The call to enter into full communion with another church is a call to conversion and an opening of the heart" because the Concordat of Agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) "offers both of our churches an opportunity for conversion to a deeper living of the Gospel and greater transparency in fulfilling Christ's continuing ministry of reconciliation and making all things new."

A message for Lutherans

After what Bishop Craig Anderson of the General Theological Seminary in New York called "two days of solid theological reflection," many bishops expressed excitement over the possibilities for mission. "The clarity was exceptional," Anderson added, "and we have the opportunity to send a message to the Lutherans."

Full communion would open a wide range of cooperation in ministry between the two churches, including interchangeability of clergy and joint consecrations of bishops. Both churches will vote on the proposals at meetings in the summer of 1997.

As part of its six-year commitment to work together in a fight against the sin of racism, the bishops were led in a day-long workshop. "The Color of Fear," a video exploration of racism in the lives of a racially diverse group of men in California, was used as the basis of reflections in the small groups.

While acknowledging that the emphasis on racism had sometimes been a struggle,

Bishop Sam Hulse of Northwest Texas said that "this was the very best effort of all--a very special time." Anderson said that the video and the presentation by the two leaders took the discussions to "a new depth."

96-1422D

Episcopal voices join protest against proposed Congressional restrictions on refugees

(ENS) Religious groups, opposed to legislation that would severely restrict access to the United States for asylum-seekers, claimed significant victories following recent Congressional votes, but still warned that other battles remain.

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) joined other church-based immigration groups in the Campaign for Refugee Protection, a 10-month effort that used telephone calls, fax messages and personal visits to Congressional representatives to support changes in immigration legislation before both houses.

The group achieved one goal when the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly in March to delete an annual cap of 50,000 on refugee admissions that had been proposed by the Immigration in the National Interest Act of 1995 bill (HR 2202), introduced by Lamar Smith (R-Texas). The cap would have cut by more than half the number of refugees permitted to enter the country each year.

The House also voted to strike all proposed cuts in the "preference categories" that allow families of immigrants to reunite, as well as other proposed cuts in legal immigration. The House bill was finally approved March 21.

The Senate Judiciary Committee, meanwhile, considering a Senate immigration bill (S 1394) introduced by Alan Simpson (R-Wyoming), voted 15-1 to eliminate a proposed 30-day deadline on persons seeking asylum after arriving in the United States. The deadline, a particular target for the campaign's efforts, is still contained in the House bill, but "at least now it's a matter for negotiation" when the House and Senate bills are eventually merged, said Richard Parkins, EMM director.

96-1423D

Episcopal Church Foundation offers to manage church's pooled-income fund

(ENS) The Episcopal Church Foundation is seeking Executive Council approval to combine the pooled income funds of the foundation and the national church in order to compete better with other charitable organizations for contributions, particularly from the

parents of Baby Boomers.

Frederick Osborn, the foundation's director of development programs, estimates that the church could benefit from more than \$200 billion in philanthropic gifts that Episcopalians will make available to all charitable organizations in the next 10 years. He estimates that people over 65 now control \$10 trillion in assets.

There is more than \$7 million in the Episcopal Church Pooled Income Fund and \$700,000 in the foundation's fund. Combining them would provide better service to donors and lower administrative costs, foundation officials claim.

Designed primarily for a donor who wants to make a gift to a parish, diocese, the national church or an affiliated organization, the pooled-income fund combines contributions into one investment portfolio. Donors receive a tax deduction for a major portion of their contribution and quarterly income payments for life for themselves and designated beneficiaries. The corpus or principal is given to the charitable recipient upon the beneficiary's death.

The administration and finance committee reviewed the foundation's proposal at the February meeting of the Executive Council in Miami, and will continue consideration at its next meeting in New York, May 21-22.

96-1424D

Presenters in Walter Righter case did not want a trial, bishop claims

(ENS) The 10 bishops who initiated the presentment against Bishop Walter Righter never wanted a trial, according to Bishop Stephen Jecko, one of those who brought the charges against the retired bishop.

"We were prepared to withdraw it twice," said Jecko, bishop of the Diocese of Florida. "In return, we wanted a moratorium on ordinations of non-celibate gays and lesbians until the issue could be resolved by General Convention in 1997. We were thwarted each time."

The first occasion, he said, was the House of Bishops meeting in March 1995 when Righter was allowed to address the bishops. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning then ruled further discussion out of order. A committee, appointed by Browning to develop dialogue with the presenting bishops, collapsed because of disagreement over the committee's role.

The second time, said Jecko, was at the House of Bishops' meeting in Portland, Oregon, last September where Browning said that he would heed the opinion of his legal counsel that there be no discussion about the impending trial.

96-1425D

With election of bishop, church's newest diocese reaches for a new vision

(ENS) The newest diocese of the Episcopal Church passed another milestone with the election of its first bishop, March 16.

The Rev. Edwin M. Leidel, Jr., rector of St. Christopher's in Roseville, Minnesota, was elected bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan with a pledge to help the fledgling diocese find its own way.

"I would rather be a catalyst to the community," Leidel said. "The vision comes out of the community."

Launched in January 1995 when it split off from the Diocese of Michigan, Eastern Michigan has taken the opportunity of a fresh start to explore new models of structure and ministry.

"We wanted to build our structure from the ground up," said Chuck Curtis, rector of St. Alban's, Bay City, and a member of the committee that created the new diocesan structures. "Second, we wanted to give more power to the laity. Third, we wanted to spread authority throughout all levels of the community."

Planners sought a decentralized model, one that would allow for a greater celebration of diversity by allowing more local involvement in decisions about funding for program and ministry. To help maintain unity within the decentralized structure, the diocese has adopted four "convocations" to group its 56 congregations into smaller units.

96-1426D

Diocese of Massachusetts asserts control of parish governed by independent corporation

(ENS) The power struggle for control of a prominent Anglo-Catholic parish in Boston's tony Beacon Hill may have entered its final stage, following the action of a special meeting of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

Last November the diocesan convention passed a canonical amendment that requires the democratic election of wardens and vestries in all parishes. That set up a direct confrontation with Church of the Advent which is governed by a self-perpetuating, independent corporation.

The corporation of Advent voted to amend its constitution to remove the provision requiring conformity to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church which provoked a "godly judgment" in February from Bishop M. Thomas Shaw. He directed the corporation to withdraw the vote and institute a form of government consistent with the

canons. Instead, on March 1 the corporation voted 13-5 to withdraw from the diocese and the Episcopal Church.

On March 3 members of Advent elected a new vestry and wardens, by a vote of 198 to 11. They also affirmed their desire to remain a part of the diocese and asked the bishop and standing committee to place the parish under the direct supervision of the bishop as a mission church.

"There are many members here of the congregation of the Parish of the Advent--men, women and children, clergy and lay--who have petitioned the Standing Committee and me in overwhelming numbers to assure them that they are full members of the body of Christ," Shaw said in his opening remarks at the special convention March 23.

Shaw said that Advent's former corporation "refused to follow the godly judgment and so now, in accordance with the canons of the church, in an effort to serve the body, I have to come to all of you. That is why we are here today. It's really holy business."

96-1420

Church settles suits against former treasurer who admitted to embezzlement

by James Solheim

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning announced March 22 that the Episcopal Church has reached an agreement to settle the church's civil suits against former treasurer Ellen Cooke and her husband, Nicholas.

In January 1995 the church discovered financial irregularities and confronted Mrs. Cooke, who had resigned earlier as treasurer at the request of the presiding bishop. A subsequent audit contended that she had embezzled \$2.2 million. She pleaded guilty in January at a federal court hearing in Newark and will be sentenced April 29.

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96-1421

Bishops energized about full communion with Lutherans--and fight against racism

by James Solheim

(ENS) For the fifth time, the bishops of the Episcopal Church met in closed session in an attempt to build a sense of community--and this time they emerged with renewed energy on two crucial issues, full communion with the Lutherans and a deeper commitment to fight the sin of racism.

"It was a lot of hard work over the years to get to this point--but we are now seeing the fruit of those labors," said Bishop Charles Keyser, suffragan for the Armed Forces, referring to a contentious meeting at the General Convention in 1991 that led to the annual gatherings at Kanuga Conference Center in North Carolina.

"We are different because of the presiding bishop's determination that we shape a community," said Bishop Jane Dixon of Washington during interviews at the conclusion of the week-long meeting in early March.

In his opening remarks, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning set the tone when he spoke of community as God's gift and said that it "requires enormous self-discipline and a radical obedience to how God has acted in our lives. It requires a conversion and a breaking open of our hearts."

An opportunity for conversion

In a letter issued March 13 (see separate text), the bishops said, "The call to enter into full communion with another church is a call to conversion and an opening of the heart" because the Concordat of Agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) "offers both of our churches an opportunity for conversion to a deeper living of the Gospel and greater transparency in fulfilling Christ's continuing ministry of reconciliation and making all things new."

After what Bishop Craig Anderson of the General Theological Seminary in New York called "two days of solid theological reflection," many bishops expressed excitement over the possibilities for mission. "The clarity was exceptional," Anderson added, "and we have the opportunity to send a message to the Lutherans."

Many bishops said that the presentation by Prof. Walter Bouman of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, had a tremendous impact on the bishops and "we responded with unanimous support for him and for the Concordat," according to Anderson. At the end of his presentation, Bouman received a standing ovation.

A historic possibility

Browning seemed to speak for many bishops when he said that "there was more energy in those two days than at any time I can remember at a House of Bishops meeting." A panel dealt "honestly and candidly" with some of the difficult issues posed by the Concordat, he said, but "overwhelming consensus" developed quickly.

The bishops saw the "historic possibility" in the proposals for full communion, and "a sense that this is the leading of the Holy Spirit, consistent with everything we have dreamed about and talked about in our search for unity," said Bishop Richard Shimpfky of El Camino Real. He said that the whole meeting was "astonishing," and that it "contained elements of a Pentecost."

Full communion would open a wide range of cooperation in ministry between the two churches, including interchangeability of clergy and joint consecrations of bishops. Both churches will vote on the proposals at meetings in the summer of 1997.

Keyser said, "Many of us had the feeling that we had been in the presence of the holy...it was a moment of grace."

Some bishops warned about the wider implications of the decision. "If it is turned down, it could be an ecumenical disaster," said Bishop Alden Hathaway of Pittsburgh. "If we don't take this step into the future we would lose something that would be difficult to regain."

A different focus

When asked why this particular meeting seemed so positive, several bishops said one of the reasons was a change to what Bishop Christopher Epting of Iowa called an "outward-focus." The 128 bishops who participated were able to develop "energy and passion around issues that we live with all the time, rather than dwelling on issues that divide us." This Kanuga meeting made it clear that "community grows out of mission," Shimpfky added, and that many of the recent controversies have "distracted us from our mission."

"The House of Bishops meeting in Portland last fall was a clear sign that we are ready to move on," Epting said. Bishop Chester Talton of Los Angeles contended that much of the energy at Kanuga was the direct result of the "breakthrough" in Portland.

Not everyone would agree that the Portland meeting was that kind of breakthrough. Six bishops wrote to Browning to say that they would not attend the Kanuga meeting to protest the action of the bishops in Portland to endorse enforcement of the canon on the ordination of women in all dioceses. "Some of our brothers have chosen not to come," Browning said in his opening remarks. "Some who have made that decision have done so because they are hurting and do not feel they have a place here," he said. "They do have a place here," he contended, adding that it was "healthy" to acknowledge "a breach in our community and pray about it."

The bishops opened the Kanuga meeting with a discussion of why some colleagues

had chosen not to come, expressing a variety of feelings. Keyser said that the bishops "felt diminished by their absence" but Dixon said, "We made a choice that community was shaped by who came to Kanuga."

"The conveners of the table groups dealt with those who were not present and concluded that we had to claim the community that was present," said Bishop Jack McKelvey of Newark.

Shimpfky stressed that it would be "a big mistake," and a "sick conclusion," to suggest that the success of this Kanuga meeting had anything to do with a boycott by conservative bishops. "Those who weren't here will get the message" that the bishops have moved beyond treating each other "like enemies."

Hathaway agreed that "this house moved light years in this single week" but admitted that he is worried about "bringing on board those who weren't present."

The bishops committed themselves to personal contacts with those who weren't present to interpret what happened.

Racism discussion moves to deeper level

As part of its six-year commitment to work together in a fight against the sin of racism, the bishops were led in a day-long workshop by the Rev. Ed Rodman of Massachusetts and Dr. Peggy McIntosh of Wellesley College.

"The Color of Fear," a video exploration of racism in the lives of a racially diverse group of men in California, was used as the basis of reflections in the small groups (see related article in Newsfeatures).

While acknowledging that the emphasis on racism had sometimes been a struggle, Bishop Sam Hulse of Northwest Texas said that "this was the very best effort of all--a very special time." Anderson said that the video and the presentation by the two leaders took the discussions to "a new depth."

"We must follow up on the insights, especially regarding the insidious nature of white privilege," said Bishop Robert Ihloff of Maryland. Bishop Charlie McNutt, the church's chief operating officer, added that the timing seemed right for both the Concordat and the discussion on racism.

Keyser said that the "deeper sense of community," developed since the confrontation in 1991, "allowed us to enter into both issues."

Many of the bishops interviewed said that "miniversities" that pulled together groups of bishops around some very practical topics added a great deal to the overall success of the meeting.

"It was exciting to hear what is happening--and what is possible," said Bishop Russell Jacobus of Fond du Lac. "They helped us see that there are so many wonderful things happening around the church--and they helped raise the energy level," added Epting. "We all went home with lots of names and resources which we can use in the future," said McKelvey.

The topics of the miniversities were congregational development, youth, models for ministry, vision, and public witness.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

96-1422

Episcopal voices join protest against proposed Congressional restrictions on refugees

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) Religious groups, opposed to legislation that would severely restrict access to the United States for asylum-seekers, claimed significant victories following recent Congressional votes, but still warned that other battles remain.

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) joined other church-based immigration groups in the Campaign for Refugee Protection, a 10-month effort that used telephone calls, fax messages, and personal visits to Congressional representatives to support changes in immigration legislation before both houses.

The group achieved one goal when the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly in March to delete an annual cap of 50,000 on refugee admissions that had been proposed by the Immigration in the National Interest Act of 1995 bill (HR 2202), introduced by Lamar Smith (R-Texas). The cap would have cut by more than half the number of refugees permitted to enter the country each year.

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The Senate Judiciary Committee, meanwhile, considering a Senate immigration bill (S 1394) introduced by Alan Simpson (R-Wyoming), voted 15-1 to eliminate a proposed 30-day deadline on persons seeking asylum after arriving in the United States. The deadline, a particular target for the campaign's efforts, is still contained in the House bill, but "at least now it's a matter for negotiation" when the House and Senate bills are eventually merged, said Richard Parkins, EMM director.

After the full Senate considers Simpson's bill later this year, the House and Senate will confer on their respective bills and send a single piece of legislation to the President to sign, he explained.

The Senate committee also overrode a provision in that bill that would have restricted the President's current authority to offer special refugee status at his discretion for groups or individuals not covered by other existing immigration categories. The proposed restrictions remain in the House bill.

Rewards for hard work

"Everyone involved in the Campaign for Refugee Protection is absolutely overjoyed at the events in Congress this week regarding refugee protection," said Elizabeth G. Ferris, director of the immigration and refugee program for Church World Service, the social outreach arm of the National Council of Churches. "After months of incredibly hard work by thousands of church advocates across the country, it's a true blessing to see these tremendous results."

While a wide range of groups participated in the campaign, "I think the religious groups played a big part in that success," said Parkins. "Our advocacy counted for something."

In spite of their enthusiasm, concerns about the bills remain, church advocates said. "We still have some battles to fight," Parkins said. "There's still some questions." And the Bishops' Committee on Migration of the United States Catholic Conference called the House bill "extreme," complaining that "some of its provisions will act to punish poor children, the most vulnerable members of our society."

Refugees who arrive at U.S. ports without proper documents could have little chance to claim asylum under provisions that remain in the House bill, Parkins said. The church groups also oppose extreme practices proposed to enforce laws against undocumented immigrants. And a current provision of the House bill would give states the right to withhold funding for education for children of undocumented immigrants. "That's just dreadful," he said. "Failing to educate any child as a matter of public policy is sheer folly."

Because the House bill "covers the waterfront" in addressing legal immigration and refugees as well as undocumented immigration, responding to it has been difficult, he said. More than 30 amendments were proposed, meaning that "we've had to be focused and targeted in our advocacy," he said.

Noting the Episcopal Church's past support for "a generous and humanitarian refugee policy," the Episcopal Church Public Policy Network, which communicates the church's stated position on social issues, also urged opposition to the bills' excesses. "Welcoming strangers is a response to our Christian imperative to care for those in need," a statement from the network said. "We are told that we may be serving angels when we open our doors to strangers."

Arizona coalition protests bills

In one region particularly affected by immigration issues, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups in Tucson, Arizona, called a press conference March 4 to voice their

opposition to the bills, and especially to the proposed 30-day deadline for claiming asylum.

At the conference, a former refugee underscored the possibly insurmountable challenges the proposed legislation would pose for refugees fleeing real persecution. The man, who used the fake name of Manuel Ortiz and wore a mask to avoid endangering his family members still in Guatemala, said it took him two years to apply for political asylum once he arrived in the U.S.

"I knew no one here," Ortiz said. "I was so worried about finding food and a place to sleep I didn't know I had any rights. I didn't know anyone could help me."

"Asylum appropriately is a human right, long embedded in Judeo-Christian thought and the history of our country, not an immigration issue," said Ila L. Abernathy, co-convenor of the Frensdorff Chapter of Episcopal Peace Fellowship in Tucson. "As citizens of a border state, we are also concerned that the proposed legislation fuels an unjust (and unjustifiable) xenophobia, at a time when our state is trying to strengthen cordial and profitable relationships with our nearest neighbors."

She pointed out that even at current levels, the United States offers resettlement to "only .5 percent of the world's 22 million refugees. Clearly we aren't pulling our weight among the nations."

Keeping the U.S. a refuge

The proposed bill "would pit the United States against the refugee and human rights standards of the civilized world," and would "destroy the U.S. asylum reforms that the Sanctuary Movement helped create," said the Rev. John Fife of Southside Presbyterian Church, who was convicted in 1986 for his role in the movement, which brought Central American refugees to the United States.

"Refugee concerns should not be mixed with measures aimed at addressing immigration control and enforcement," said Irena Chodaczniak of Episcopal Community Services Refugee Resettlement Program, echoing a frequent complaint that the bills blur the distinctions between legal and illegal immigration. "Asylum-seekers fleeing persecution should not face unreasonable obstacles when they seek persecution in the U.S."

"We feel this opposition to and fear of immigrants is misguided," noted the Rev. Stuart Taylor of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church. "Research shows that immigrants do not cause unemployment but are necessary replacements for an aging work force. Immigrants do not rip off welfare services because on the average they pay in more in taxes than they receive in benefits."

The House bill "does not reform as much as it demotes the basic human dignity of all individuals who come to the United States for political asylum or as refugees," said the Rev. Tom Tureman of St. Cyril's Roman Catholic Church, Tucson.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

96-1423

Episcopal Church Foundation offers to manage church's pooled-income fund

by Jerry Hames

(ENS) The Episcopal Church Foundation is seeking Executive Council approval to combine the pooled income funds of the foundation and the national church in order to compete better with other charitable organizations for contributions, particularly from the parents of Baby Boomers.

Frederick Osborn, the foundation's director of development programs, estimates that the church could benefit from more than \$200 billion in philanthropic gifts that Episcopalians will make available to all charitable organizations in the next 10 years. He estimates that people over 65 now control \$10 trillion in assets.

"The church has a one-time opportunity," Osborn said. "This generational transfer [of assets] is unparalleled in human history."

There is more than \$7 million in the Episcopal Church Pooled Income Fund and \$700,000 in the foundation's fund. Combining them would provide better service to donors and lower administrative costs, foundation officials claim.

The administration and finance committee reviewed the foundation's proposal at the February meeting of the Executive Council in Miami, and will continue consideration at its next meeting in New York, May 21-22.

Not a takeover

"This is not a proposed takeover," said William G. Andersen Jr., the Foundation's executive director. "It would be consolidating two pooled-income funds to create a stronger one. The church needs to be at the strongest point it can in order to take advantage of potential philanthropic gifts."

Designed primarily for a donor who wants to make a gift to a parish, diocese, the national church or an affiliated organization, the pooled-income fund combines contributions into one investment portfolio. Donors receive a tax deduction for a major portion of their contribution and quarterly income payments for life for themselves and designated beneficiaries. The corpus or principal is given to the charitable recipient upon the beneficiary's death.

Under the foundation's plan, a committee composed of representatives from both the foundation and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, the church's incorporated body, would supervise operation of the pooled funds and other planned gifts. Under the proposal, Executive Council would reserve the right to withdraw from the agreement at any time and appoint another trustee to manage the fund.

The church's pooled-income fund was begun in 1984 by the planned-giving office.

Since 1994, when that office was closed as a result of staff cutbacks, the treasurer's office has been responsible for providing information and assistance to donors.

Osborn, who was the church's planned-giving officer, joined the Episcopal Church Foundation after the office closed. The foundation's board of directors voted to undertake a national program for planned giving beginning in 1995.

--Jerry Hames is editor of *Episcopal Life*, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church.

96-1424

Presenters in Walter Righter case did not want a trial, bishop claims

By Jerry Hames

(ENS) The 10 bishops who initiated the presentment against Bishop Walter Righter never wanted a trial, according to Bishop Stephen Jecko, one of those who brought the charges against the retired bishop.

"We were prepared to withdraw it twice," said Jecko, bishop of the Diocese of Florida since May, 1994. "In return, we wanted a moratorium on ordinations of non-celibate gays and lesbians until the issue could be resolved by General Convention in 1997. We were thwarted each time."

Jecko was among five presenting bishops who attended the first stage of the trial in Wilmington, Delaware, February 27.

The first occasion, he said, was the House of Bishops meeting in March, 1995, when Righter was allowed to address the bishops. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning then ruled further discussion out of order. A committee, appointed by Browning to develop dialogue with the presenting bishops, collapsed because of disagreement over the committee's role.

The second time, said Jecko, was at the House of Bishops' meeting at Portland, Oregon, last September. "We had gone there to discuss the issue. We were told it [the trial] was a done deal," he said.

Legal counsel advised against discussion

Browning said at the Portland meeting that he would heed the opinion of his legal counsel that there be no discussion about the impending trial. When one bishop began to talk about the trial, the bishops who act as judges immediately left the room.

Jecko said that the presenting bishops and some retired bishops who came to Portland to discuss the issue felt "undercut" by that decision. He maintained that all 76 bishops who signed the presentment had been told that the charge could be withdrawn if a temporary moratorium was agreed to.

A trial "is not the way to resolve the issue unless you feel it's the last resort--which we did," said Jecko.

Bishop Keith Ackerman of the Diocese of Quincy in Illinois, another bishop who initiated the presentment, also believed the trial would never progress this far. He reportedly told Browning during the presiding bishop's visit to the diocese several months ago that he had been assured that the bishops would resolve the issue of ordaining non-celibate homosexuals without a trial.

The presenting bishops stated early in the process that they intended to bring charges against other bishops who have ordained non-celibate homosexuals. That plan appears to have been dropped.

"I can't think of 10 bishops who you could get to agree to do this again. There are none I could see on the horizon," Bishop James M. Stanton of the Diocese of Dallas, one of the presenting bishops, told *The News Journal* newspaper of Wilmington. "It's not as if there is one central authority that is doing all of this. I'm not a party of any [further hearings] and none are in the works that I know of."

"Everyone has agreed that it's really been tragic that we had to come to this point," Roger Boltz, associate director of Episcopalians United, told *The News Journal*. "All the presenters wanted to do was see that these illegal ordinations would cease until the church approved them," he said.

--Jerry Hames is editor of *Episcopal Life*, national newspaper of the Episcopal Church.

96-1425

With election of bishop, church's newest diocese reaches for a new vision

by Steve Waring

(ENS) The newest diocese of the Episcopal Church passed another milestone with the election of its first bishop, March 16.

The Rev. Edwin M. Leidel, Jr., rector of St. Christopher's in Roseville, Minnesota, was elected bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan with a pledge to help the fledgling

diocese find its own way.

"I would rather be a catalyst to the community," Leidel said. "The vision comes out of the community."

Launched in January 1995 when it split off from the Diocese of Michigan, Eastern Michigan has taken the opportunity of a fresh start to explore new models of structure and ministry.

"We wanted to build our structure from the ground up," said the Rev. Chuck Curtis, rector of St. Alban's, Bay City, and a member of the committee that created the new diocesan structures. "Second, we wanted to give more power to the laity. Third, we wanted to spread authority throughout all levels of the community."

A vision of decentralization

Planners sought a decentralized model, one that would allow for a greater celebration of diversity by allowing more local involvement in decisions about funding for program and ministry.

Some doubters did not believe a geographical region with such a wide diversity of beliefs could come to consensus on anything, especially a form of government. Eastern Michigan contains people holding just about every theological position in the Episcopal Church, said John Coppage, diocesan administrator.

But "we're a diocese that is willing to risk change," observed the Rev. Elizabeth Morris Downie of St. Jude's, Fenton, in her sermon at the diocese's first convention last October. "We're not a diocese that's committed to business as usual. We're reaching for a vision."

Even the first convention itself reflected that openness to a different model as the Rev. J. Thomas Downs, host rector, told delegates to expect a gathering that would be "more in common with a family reunion than a stockholder's annual meeting." He noted that "it has long been a dream of many of us to have a diocese that was less institutional and more familial. According to this new vision, the congregation itself becomes the focus of ministry and the diocese a source of pastoral caring and practical assistance."

Unity in diversity

The diocese's diversity must be the basis for unity, rather than disunity, Downie stressed. "We are also joined to all those other folk who have been baptized into Christ whether or not we happen to agree," she said. "Living into our unity requires one major change of perspective and then countless disciplined words and actions."

To help maintain unity within the decentralized structure, the diocese has adopted four "convocations" to group its 56 congregations into smaller units. "I have heard some lament that with emphasis on convocations we are creating four dioceses," said Standing Committee President Jack Carlsen. "That could possibly become a problem sometime in the future. For now, however, substituting four active convocations for 56 independent principalities is a

giant ecclesiastical step forward."

As part of the vision for decentralized ministry, Leidel endorsed a diocesan goal to have each congregation served by one priest and one deacon. At the moment, only 10 congregations match that pattern.

--Steve Waring is communications director for the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

96-1426

Diocese of Massachusetts asserts control over parish governed by independent corporation

by James Solheim

(ENS) The power struggle for control of a prominent Anglo-Catholic parish in Boston's tony Beacon Hill may have entered its final stage, following the action of a special convocation of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

Last November the diocesan convention passed a canonical amendment that requires the democratic election of wardens and vestries in all parishes. That set up a direct confrontation with Church of the Advent which has been governed by a self-perpetuating, independent corporation.

The corporation of Advent voted to amend its constitution to remove the provision requiring conformity to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church which provoked a "godly judgment" in February from Bishop Thomas Shaw. He directed the corporation to withdraw the vote and institute a form of government consistent with the canons. Instead, on March 1 the corporation voted 13-5 to withdraw from the diocese and the Episcopal Church.

On March 3 members of Advent elected a new vestry and wardens, by a vote of 198 to 11. They also affirmed their desire to remain a part of the diocese and asked the bishop and Standing Committee to place the parish under the direct supervision of the bishop as a mission church.

'Holy business'

"There are many members here of the congregation of the Parish of the Advent--men, women and children, clergy and lay--who have petitioned the Standing Committee and me in overwhelming numbers to assure them that they are full members of the body of Christ,"

Shaw said in his opening remarks at the special convention March 23.

Shaw said that Advent's former corporation "refused to follow the godly judgment and so now, in accordance with the canons of the church, in an effort to serve the body, I have to come to all of you. That is why we are here today. It's really holy business."

The one-hour meeting closed with the Eucharist. "We spent the first part of the morning coming together as a church to solve a problem," said Robert Bacon, president of the Standing Committee, in his sermon. "Now, after having done our work, it is time to celebrate the Eucharist together as a family and go back out to continue the Lord's work around this diocese."

--James Solheim is director of news and information of the Episcopal Church.



news briefs

96-1427

Nominees for Presiding Bishop to be announced in April, 1997

(ENS) The Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of a Presiding Bishop announced following its March meeting that it hopes to be able to present a final list of nominees by mid-April 1997. The next presiding bishop will be elected at the General Convention meeting in Philadelphia in July 1997. Co-chair Katherine Tyler Scott of Indianapolis said the committee has developed a time-line that ensures that the selection process will have "integrity and depth to it." Of 38 names submitted for consideration, the committee report states, 26 people were considered eligible according to the criteria of age and tenure set by the committee. Those criteria require that nominees were born on or after July 1, 1935, and consecrated as bishops on or before January 1, 1993. Church canons set a mandatory retirement age of 70 (the presiding bishop must resign at the General Convention "nearest to the date of attaining" that age). In a separate development, the House of Bishops received a letter signed by 133 clergy and lay people urging any bishops who might be considered for the post but who know they have engaged in "physical violence, sexual abuse [or] sexual exploitation" to withdraw their names from consideration.

Archbishop warns of decline of religion in East Germany

(Tablet) Cardinal George Sterzinsky of Berlin recently warned that the decline of religion in the former East Germany (GDR) is worse than was previously believed and risks bringing about the virtual collapse of church life. He has also criticized a "growing nostalgia" for the former communist state and the widespread view that easterners could have "managed much better" without unification in October 1990. "Secularization is common to the whole Western World," he said. "But in Germany it started earlier and occurred more quickly." Sterzinsky said that in the first years of the GDR, anti-church measures were harshly applied, but these merely strengthened resistance. "So a new tactic was adopted--to be completely silent about God. Today, we see the results of this dual process: 20 years of repression, 20 years of silence." He said that he believed church estimates putting Christians at a quarter of the GDR's population of 16.2 million, compared with 98 percent from the pre-war period, were "too optimistic."

WCC receives \$105,000 in grants from Lilly Endowment

(ENS) The U.S. Conference of the World Council of Churches (WCC) recently received two grants totaling \$105,247 from Lilly Endowment Inc. to learn more about how the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, had influenced the ecumenical movement in the United States. The grants coincide with the 50th anniversary this year of the Ecumenical Institute, which is related to the WCC and the University of Geneva. The money will be used to conduct research on the views and accomplishments of United States alumni of the institute, according to the Rev. John B. Lindner, project coordinator. Lindner is director of the Ecumenical Development Initiative, which seeks grants and gifts to support the work of the WCC and the U.S. National Council of Churches. "Ultimately, the researchers hope to discern whether Bossey's unique practices and methodologies might be replicated in other settings to make a new contribution to American theological education," he said. The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey was founded in 1946 as a place for Christians from all continents to study. "It is one of the pillars of the ecumenical movement around the world," Lindner said. "Bonds formed at Bossey have literally begun the process of peacemaking among communities and nations."

Carey's view on remarriage misrepresented by press

(ENS) The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) recently upheld a complaint by Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey that *The Sunday Times* misrepresented his position over the possible remarriage of the Prince of Wales to Camilla Parker Bowles. Carey made his objection to the PCC after the newspaper published a story suggesting that he would be "prepared to bless a union" between the Prince of Wales and Bowles. His office immediately denied the report, but, according to Lambeth Palace, the newspaper refused to print an apology and retraction. Carey brought a formal complaint to the PCC. It is the first time that he had complained to the PCC. In the final part of their judgement, the PCC stated that "There was no basis for the newspaper to report that the archbishop was 'ready' to bless a hypothetical remarriage of the Prince of Wales, or indeed any other remarriage"

Pope says church is not to blame in Rwanda

(ENS) Pope John Paul II said in a recent letter that the Roman Catholic Church could not be held responsible for the misdeeds of individual members during the genocide in Rwanda two years ago. But in the letter, released by the Vatican, the Pope said, "All the members of the church who have sinned during the genocide must have the courage to bear the consequences of the deeds that they have committed against God and against their future." The Pope singled out no groups or individuals, and he urged the church in Rwanda to set an example for reconciliation. In the letter, the Pope reflected on the two years since a power struggle between Tutsi and Hutu rivals escalated into massacres that killed about 500,000 people. About 60 percent of Rwanda's population are Roman Catholic. African Rights, a London-based human rights group, and other groups have said that some priests in

Rwanda actively encouraged the killing, and that the Catholic hierarchy took no action to stop the slaughter.

Bread for the World launches annual letter-writing campaign

(ENS) Bread for the World (BFW) recently announced the launch of this year's offering of letters campaign, *Elect To End Childhood Hunger*. The goal of the campaign is for BFW to form partnerships with churches and other organizations to secure commitments from Congressional candidates to support legislation and programs that will help overcome childhood hunger in the United States. According to BFW, participating churches will write letters to members of Congress during worship services and place them in the offering plate "as a gift of their citizenship for the sake of hungry people. All candidates running in the 1996 congressional elections, across party lines, will be asked to promise that, once elected, they will push for legislation and federal programs that address childhood hunger in the U.S." BFW president David Beckman said that "the attacks by the 104th Congress on the little we have been spending to help poor people makes me fearful that God will come in judgement against our nation and its churches." In his endorsement of the campaign, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said that the church has always been called to "stand with the poor and those most in need. The children of America are faced with enormous obstacles to their well-being because of violence, hunger and other threats. Our task as Christians is to advocate on their behalf to a sometimes indifferent government, local and national, and say that hunger among our nation's children is intolerable," he said.

New York diocese creates computer sharing program

(ENS) The communications committee of the Diocese of New York recently announced a new project to collect new and used computers for congregations that need them. "There is a growing gap between congregations with computerized church offices and those that are forced to do everything--accounts, writing, membership lists--by hand," said the Rev. Martha Overall, chair of the communications committee and priest-in-charge of St. Ann's in the Bronx. "The committee aims to create a more level playing field where all congregations have the opportunity to improve communications and church management with computer technology." The Program to Assist Congregations in Computers and Training (PACCT) began with a gift from the vestry of Trinity Church and the Trinity Grants Board enabling the committee to begin offering limited funding to congregations who need financial assistance towards purchasing computer software, modems and training.

ELCA speaks out against anti-gay rhetoric in elections

(ENS) The board of the Division for Church in Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) recently adopted a motion opposing the anti-gay atmosphere of the '96 campaign season. The motion delineates the ELCA's opposition to "all forms of verbal and physical harassment or assault of persons because of their sexual orientation," and

seeks to "prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services and accommodations." The motion instructs the ELCA's executive director to inform the chairs of the national conventions of the two major political parties of the ELCA's position.

German church considers ordaining practicing homosexuals

(ENI) Practicing homosexuals could be admitted to the ordained ministry in certain circumstances, according to a recent report by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), whose 24 member churches represent the majority of Protestants in Germany. But the report, *Living with Tensions*, said that this should only happen in "individual cases" where there is an "ethically responsible" homosexual lifestyle, and if a number of conditions are fulfilled. The report underlined that there should be no blanket decision by the EKD to allow the ordination of practicing homosexuals. The report said that a decision to admit practicing homosexuals to the ordained ministry would mean a "break" with "official practice in Christian churches for hundreds of years." Many other churches continue to uphold this practice of not ordaining practicing homosexuals, the report pointed out. "If such a step is necessary for the sake of truth and love, then we must dare to take it," said the report's authors. The EKD council has accepted the report as a "contribution to the present debate."

Thieves are forcing Britain's churches to lock up

(ENI) Britain's ancient tradition of keeping parish churches open--allowing passers-by to stop in for prayer, reflection or out of curiosity--is under threat recently from thieves, arsonists and vandals. Crime affecting the nation's 16,000 Anglican churches cost at least 6 million pounds sterling (US \$9 million) last year--an increase of one-third in six years. Even locking up the church may not solve the problem of theft, said Thomas Cocke, secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches (CCC). He said some "bogus visitors" borrowed keys to "look around the church" and then made off with treasures. The press conference was held to launch *Safe and Sound?*, a guide to church security. About half the nation's parish churches date from before the 17th-century Reformation. Many contain medieval gems and silver, paintings, sculptures and carvings. Along with theft, arson and vandalism are main causes of damage to churches, according to the Ecclesiastical Group, the chief insurers of parish churches. Colin Scott, Anglican Bishop of Hulme and CCC chairman, told the press conference that because of crime most churches in his inner city-area of Manchester were now locked. Calling for more church security, the bishop said, "We are not talking about turning churches into Fort Knox, but taking sensible measures."

'Dead Man Walking' wins inaugural award for 'inspiring movie'

(ENI) "Dead Man Walking," a film based on a nun's work with prisoners on death row, recently became the first winner of a new Templeton prize for "inspiring movies." The film stars the actress Susan Sarandon. The first award for "inspiring television" went to an episode of "Christy," a CBS-TV series about a missionary schoolteacher in Appalachia. John

Templeton, who already sponsors several major awards, including the prestigious annual Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, has now set up "Prizes for Inspiring Movies and TV" to encourage inspirational productions that result in "a great increase in either man's love of God or man's understanding of God." "Dead Man Walking" is based on a book of the same name by Helen Prejean, a member of the Roman Catholic order of Sisters of St Joseph. A former teacher in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Prejean began visiting prisoners awaiting execution on death row. She developed a deep opposition to capital punishment and now chairs the board of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. Last year she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow for her efforts. "Christy" began as a novel with the same name, written by the late Catherine Marshall and based on the life of her mother in Tennessee.

Canadian judge rules that Anglican priest cannot sue church

(ENI)--A Canadian judge recently ruled that an Anglican priest cannot sue for wrongful dismissal. Justice Hector Soubliere of the Ontario Court ruled on an unusual civil suit filed by Arthur Brewer against the Anglican Church of Canada's Ottawa diocese and Bishop John Baycroft. *The Toronto Star* reported that Brewer was seeking \$125,000 in damages, claiming that the church did not give him reasonable notice when it issued a termination letter in June of 1992. The priest had suffered a heart attack, as well as a break-in and a fire at his Ottawa church office in 1989. After 35 years in the ministry, he was transferred to another church in Ottawa, but a conflict arose with his parishioners. Judge Soubliere said that according to the church's canons and rules, a priest was an ecclesiastical office-holder--similar to the position of a judge or other secular authority--and was considered neither a contractor nor employee. Instead, he or she was "in partnership with the bishop," sharing authority over the parish and "the people of God," the judge ruled.

Vatican 'reconsidering' case of Czech reformer burnt at stake

(ENI) The Vatican is "re-considering" the case of Jan Hus, the Bohemian reformer who was executed in 1415 as a heretic, but is not planning to rehabilitate him, according to a spokesperson for the Roman Catholic Church in the Czech Republic. A Czech newspaper recently claimed that Rome would this year exonerate Hus. The newspaper, *Lidove Noviny*, also claimed that the Vatican was considering Hus's beatification. Miloslav Fiala, the spokesperson for the Czech Bishops' Conference, said that although the case of Hus was being "reconsidered" by the Vatican, "the aim is not Hus's rehabilitation or canonization, only an objective re-evaluation of his work." Fiala said that a "preliminary declaration" on the case could be made during 1996. Any decision by the Vatican would depend, he said, on the recommendations of a Czech inter-denominational commission, set up in 1993 by Cardinal Miloslav Vlk of Prague, who last year became the first Roman Catholic leader to join Protestants in commemorating Hus's martyrdom. Commission members, who include theologians, historians and officials from the Roman Catholic, Hussite and Protestant

churches, are studying Hus's writings, as well as documents from the Council of Constance which condemned him to death, Fiala said. Hus was rector of Prague University when summoned to Constance on a pledge of safe conduct to explain his teachings. He was burned at the stake in 1415.

Shevardnadze contributes to cathedral promoting national unity

(ENI) The Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnadze, recently made a personal donation to the construction of a new Orthodox cathedral in Tbilisi, as a gesture to national unity. Speaking after a foundation-laying ceremony on March 3, Shevardnadze, a former local KGB chief, said the building of a "great future temple" would "worthily bring the Second Millennium to a close," and enable the former Soviet republic to "cross into the 21st century as a united, undivided, strong and contented country." According to Dzemory Grashvili, a spokesman for the Georgian Orthodox Patriarchate, Shevardnadze had played a "very active" role on the national council which is overseeing the project, and had ensured backing from various government ministries. About 80 per cent of Georgia's 5.44 million citizens are nominal Orthodox Christians, although the republic is also home to Roman Catholic, Armenian Apostolic and Muslim minorities.

After apartheid, ecumenism is off South African agenda

(ENI) The ousting of the apartheid regime through South Africa's first democratic, non-racial elections in 1994 has had many positive consequences for the country, but in one area--church unity--South Africa has experienced a recent slump. During the apartheid era, various denominations and different faiths organized and appeared side-by-side at anti-apartheid rallies, peace marches, church services and funerals of activists killed by security forces. "It is true there was a great deal more co-operation between denominations in the days of apartheid," Albert Nolan said, one of the *Kairos* theologians who in the 1980s formed a biblical and theological lobby against apartheid. "That doesn't mean churches no longer want ecumenism. If there were a common crisis tomorrow, we would once again work together as closely as before." He suggested that the various denominations which worked together to fight the common enemy of apartheid, should discover poverty and development as new common causes for ecumenical co-operation. "The churches have not yet recognized the reconstruction of the new South Africa as a common cause for which they should team up," Nolan said.

Poland accused of treating Anglican Church as a sect

(ENI) The head of Poland's small Anglican community recently accused the Polish government of arbitrarily refusing to grant the Anglican Church legal status. The issue is particularly sensitive as Queen Elizabeth II--who has the historic title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England--made her first state visit to Poland in late March. Though the application by the Anglican community has not been officially rejected, many Anglicans

interpret continuing delays and obstacles to their application as virtual refusal. While the government's actions do not prevent Poland's Anglicans from practicing their religion, the lack of official status will cause difficulties and is regarded as offensive. "They [the Polish government] appear not to realize we are a mainstream church, not just a sect," said David Williams, who worked as a parish priest in Wales before becoming Poland's only full-time Anglican chaplain late last year. "All we are trying to do is provide pastoral care for expatriate Anglicans and Episcopalians here. We have no intention of proselytizing, or attempting to win over, baptized Roman Catholics, Lutherans or Orthodox," he said.

Jerusalem will not become a Berlin, says Shimon Peres

(ENI) Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said recently that there will be no secular intervention in religious activities in Jerusalem, except on grounds of security. Peres was speaking to a delegation of the Lutheran World Federation, led by its general secretary, Ishmael Noko, during a meeting in Jerusalem on March 18. There were no plans to "make Jerusalem [into] a Berlin," Peres told Noko, after Noko had said that Jerusalem "should be an undivided city that is open to both Palestinians and Israelis." Noko said the LWF had always advocated co-existence between two states and three religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity) in the city. The Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the West Bank had not been able to hold synod meetings, Noko said, since border closures had been re-introduced in the wake of the four recent suicide bombings which killed 61 people in Israel. The bombings were intended to wreck the Middle East peace process. Commenting on the rigorous measures Israel has taken to try to halt the bombings, the Peres agreed that closures preventing the free movement of the Palestinians were "a collective punishment." But he added that the bombings targeting Israelis had also been "collective punishment."

People

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Paul Bigliardi, retired bishop of Oregon, died of a heart attack on February 26, 1996. He attended the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and served as priest at Mercer Island, Washington, before becoming bishop of Oregon in 1974. He retired in 1985. From 1988 until 1991, and again from 1992 to 1993, Bigliardi served as bishop of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe.

The Rev. Richard D. McCall, at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, **the Rev. Leigh Axton Williams**, at the General Theological Seminary, and **the Rev. Donald D. Binder**, at Southern Methodist University, are the 1996-97 Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) fellowship recipients. ECF fellowships seek to ensure top-quality faculty for Episcopal seminaries by funding the doctoral education of lay and ordained individuals who show

strong promise for teaching.

Bishop Bob Jones of Wyoming and **Bishop Steven Charleston** of Alaska are headed for posts at two academic institutions with ties to the Episcopal Church. Jones will become the new dean of St. George's College in Jerusalem some time this summer, and Charleston began April 1 as chaplain at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, his alma mater. St. George's is a center for continuing education for the Anglican Communion, offering facilities for study and research in the Holy Land. St. George's Cathedral on the close is the spiritual center for Anglicans in the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East. Charleston, who resigned as bishop last fall for family reasons, will be responsible for spiritual life and serve as an adviser to student groups at the college, founded in 1823.



news features

96-1428

Orthodox unity threatened by struggle for jurisdiction over Estonian church

by James Solheim

(ENS) When Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the divine liturgy on February 23, for the first time in over a millennium he omitted prayers for the Ecumenical Patriarch--a vivid demonstration of a bitter conflict that threatens the unity of the world's estimated 250 million Orthodox.

At the center of the dispute is jurisdiction over the Orthodox Church in Estonia, a former republic of the Soviet Union. "Evidently, there are political, not ecclesiastical reasons, at the core of the conflict," said Metropolitan Kirill, chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The conflict reached a climax on February 20 when the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, regarded by Orthodox as "first among equals" among the world's 16 independent churches, established jurisdiction over the Estonian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church argued that the action coincided with attempts by the Estonian government to cut all links with Russia.

Caught in the middle are Estonians of Russian descent, many of whom wish to keep church and cultural links with Moscow and the church, and those of Estonian descent who want to cut those links. Patriarch Alexy himself was born and raised in Estonia and served as its bishop for 25 years.

Break in communion

Russian missionaries and colonists brought Orthodox Christianity to Estonia in the 13th century and, since it became part of the Russian Empire in 1721, the church was administered by Russian bishops. When Estonia became independent in 1920, the church was granted autonomy by the Russian patriarch, but remained under his jurisdiction.

During the Communist era when contacts between the churches were forbidden, the

church was placed under jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. When Estonia became part of the Soviet Union in 1940, the Estonians became a diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The diocese resumed its autonomous state in 1992 but the Estonian government wanted the church to cut ties with Moscow. So the government registered an emigre Orthodox group that had fled to Sweden and it refused to register the Russian Diocese. Instead it urged Orthodox clergy and parishes to switch loyalty to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Moscow considers the Estonian Apostolic Church uncanonical and has suspended all clergy who support it. When dialogue between Moscow and the Ecumenical Patriarchate failed to resolve the conflict, Alexy broke communion.

"The existing canonical church has been thus outlawed and its churches and all the church property are threatened to be alienated," said a February 29 press release from Moscow. It emphasized its claim of canonical jurisdiction over all the former states of the Soviet Union except Georgia. A message from Alexy to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I warned that his action "would destroy the ages-old norms of relationships between local Orthodox churches and deliver a mortal blow against all-Orthodox unity."

Ecumenical relations threatened

"If the Moscow Patriarchate sticks to this position, it would constitute the most serious division of the Christian church since the split between Rome and Constantinople in the 11th century," said Prof. Dimitry Pospelovsky of Canada.

Since both patriarchates are active in the World Council of Churches, the conflict could have profound effects on the future of the WCC and the ecumenical movement as a whole. It is already worrying many ecumenical partners, including the Episcopal Church.

Prof. J. Robert Wright of the General Theological Seminary in New York called it "unprecedented and ecumenically unsettling." As a long-time participant and observer of dialogue with the Orthodox, he pointed out that the Orthodox have repeatedly claimed that they were the "one true Church of Christ, which as his Body is not and cannot be divided."

"It would now seem that they can no longer honestly make that claim," Wright said. While the Episcopal Church "still has warm and friendly relations with both patriarchates," he added, "perhaps now more than ever, they both need our support--as well as our Anglican experience of living in a broken world."

Wright, who has been personally honored by both patriarchs, said they were "proven and time-tested leaders in the ecumenical movement and I have every confidence that they will find a way to heal this division."

Bishop Mark Dyer of Virginia Theological Seminary agreed that "there is every reason to believe that the patriarchs will reach reconciliation and work out their mutual concerns." As co-chair of the international dialogue with the Orthodox, he said that he "couldn't imagine that the controversy would lead to schism." He finds that "a theological impossibility" because of what he called "the strong undercurrent of unity among the

Orthodox that can't be broken."

Efforts to avoid schism

"We face a lot of work to avoid schism," Metropolitan Kirill said at a March 4 press conference. "We are convinced that today Orthodoxy needs unity as never before in the context of reforms in Eastern Europe and integration of the European Community."

The Rev. George Tssetsis, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the WCC in Geneva, rejected Moscow's claim to jurisdiction over the Estonians based on their missionary work. He argued that it was common in the Orthodox world that "ecclesiastical developments follow new political realities," pointing out that the Russian church itself became a patriarchate in 1593 at the request of the Russian Tsar.

Tssetsis bristled at the suggestion that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was involved in a power play, that "Constantinople is generals without an army," based on the small number of Orthodox Christians in Turkey. He said that a church is "not measured on the basis of the numbers of her believers, but rather on the basis of her martyrs, saints and confessors... only on the basis of the quality of her witness and diakonia." He quickly added that both sides seem eager to solve the problem. "Let us hope that peace and justice will prevail--but justice is not necessarily on the side of the powerful," he added.

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church discussed the "tragic developments" March 21 and underscored the need for "bilateral negotiations." It appointed Kirill and Metropolitan Juvenaly, joined by Archbishop Kornilius of Tallinn and All Estonia, to pursue the dialogue.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

96-1429

Virginia friends find forgiveness and grace in aftermath of tragedy

by Sarah Bartenstein

(ENS) St. Stephen's Church and Phil's Continental Lounge are just a few blocks apart on Grove Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, but a world of pain, forgiveness and redemption stands between them for two men who were ordained to the priesthood in January.

St. Stephen's is where the Rev. Paul N. Walker was ordained January 10. His lifelong friend, the Rev. Andrew S. Rollins, was ordained January 13 at Trinity Church in New Orleans where he now serves. Walker is assistant at Christ Church, Charlottesville.

The two men, who were ordained to the diaconate together in June, have been friends since the fourth grade. They attended elementary school, middle school and high school together in Richmond. Though they went to different universities, they attended the same divinity school and have never lost touch with one another.

During the summer following their freshman year in college, however, something happened that would change their lives forever, and might have caused another pair of friends to part company.

A life-changing night

One night in July 1983, Walker, Rollins and three other friends were involved in a single-car accident after leaving a popular West End watering hole. Walker was behind the wheel.

Although none of them had been drinking, says Rollins, "Paul was horsing around." Walker says they were "playing chicken." They ran off the road and struck a huge boulder. Walker suffered broken bones. His passengers, none of whom wore a seat belt, received various injuries, but none of them as irrevocable as the one sustained by his best friend.

Drew Rollins lost his left eye.

The aftermath of the accident for Walker was "incredible psychological denial . . . for six months: 'There's no way I could be responsible for doing this to my best friend.'" He calls the "psychological gymnastics" he went through the "dark reality" of the experience.

The other reality, he says, was "a light reality." He says he clearly remembers the day he was able to get out of his own hospital bed and walk into Rollins' room. His friend, he said, "was all bandaged up. He looked terrible, but he was cognizant enough to know I was there . . . and he said, 'I love you. This is a clean slate.'"

"That was the seminal moment" for Walker, when he experienced "God's grace, forgiveness and love." Rollins, for his part, remembers those months only as "a blur," he said. Though he was in a great deal of physical pain, "I really didn't have a lot of anger toward Paul," he said. "I think I felt much more confusion over what was happening to me, the loss of my eye and dealing with that, rather than [anger at] Paul."

He added, "I really felt like it could have been me just as easily as Paul [behind the wheel of the car]. Through our high school years, we believed we were invincible and immortal and did a lot of that kind of thing."

A difficult adjustment

The weeks following the accident were difficult for these friends, and for their families. The young men were not allowed to speak with one another for the remainder of

that summer because of legal issues which loomed following the tragedy. For two people who been neighbors for years, growing up near the University of Richmond and "going in and out of each other's houses at will," that was tough, says Walker.

Both recall the day they rode in the same car, each accompanied by his attorney, to give depositions. Walker says they looked at each other and said, "This really sucks."

Rollins says he knew that as hard as the entire experience was "it would have been much more painful to go through this apart." He remembers "wanting to talk to Paul, wanting that friendship to be available. I knew I needed Paul's friendship and valued his friendship as much as I did before the wreck."

Maturing in faith

Each went back to school. For Rollins, at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, it was a difficult semester academically. He was trying to adjust to doing his schoolwork with one eye, and had to go to Nashville for surgery on several occasions. And "it is a long struggle, realizing that you are never going to look the way you did," he says. But Sewanee was the best place for him to be because he was in the midst of a "wonderful Christian community that supported me."

Rollins had a conversion experience while he was involved with Young Life. "I had a real 180-degree turnaround," Rollins says. "In my senior year in high school and my first year at Sewanee I was maturing in my faith. I had real Christian brothers and sisters supporting me."

That faith not only helped him through the agonizing weeks and months following the accident; it also affected Walker.

Once back at school, Rollins and Walker spoke frequently. Walker, at the University of Virginia, even considered spending a semester at Sewanee, but realized that his real motive was to be near Rollins and to try to "fix" things.

Despite the assurances of his friend that he was forgiven, Walker continued to find it difficult to forgive himself. "At first, I'd blame the car . . . something must have been wrong with the car." Then, he had haunting dreams, "eschatological dreams," he called them, of Rollins with his eye restored. Then he wondered, "Why should I have survived?"

A moment of cleansing

Finally, on the way to a court hearing, Walker said to his attorney, "Look, I did this thing. I need to take responsibility for this." He recalled that "spiritually, for me, that helped me to move forward. I remember that as a real cleansing." Then he and Rollins chuckle over the idea of Walker's lawyer as confessor.

Walker married following graduation in 1986 and backpacked through Europe with his new wife. Rollins joined them for a time.

When the newlyweds returned to their home in Charlottesville, Walker built furniture and did restoration work. Rollins, who had been involved in youth ministry while at

Sewanee, was a full-time youth worker at St. Matthew's, Richmond.

Soon afterward, the Walkers were sent to Haiti by St. Matthew's where Paul helped develop a carpentry project, while his wife taught school. Rollins sent them a "care package" every month.

"I just had this clear sense of God saying, 'This is what I want you to do.'"

A second call

Soon after Walker's call, Rollins sensed a call of his own. "I was trying to decide whether to take the career youth ministry route or a career in counseling," he recalls. Then he felt called to a different path. The vestry ordination committee process was for him a searching process, one he began without a clear idea that ordination was for him.

In 1989, during a visit with the Walkers, Rollins revealed his new vocation. "I was excited when I finally told [Walker]," he says. "But we didn't dare to think we'd be entering the same seminary at the same time."

It was only when they got further into the process that they realized they'd walk this walk together, too. During that process, as at other times, they were able to tell the story, not of tragedy, but of a friendship. They joke about classmates and faculty at Virginia Seminary accusing them of being joined at the hip.

Today, serving in different dioceses, they don't see each other as often as they did in the shadow of the University of Richmond, or on the campus of Virginia Seminary. But they are in touch, as always.

What does their friendship, and the tragedy that could not destroy it, mean in their ministries?

Walker remembers the words of a Young Life minister offered after the accident. "I remember him saying at the time, prophetically, 'Your friendship and your love for each other will be a witness for Christ's love, and I think you guys will go on and be in ministry together.' I don't think he envisioned this particular manifestation, ordained ministry.

For his part, says Rollins, "I don't trot out the story [of the wreck] very easily. But it gives me a confidence in the face of some kind of brokenness . . . that God is present in the midst of our suffering, but of course you have to be careful about how you say that. I can say that my experience tells me that God is with us in our suffering."

Now these two friends bring a new dimension to their long relationship: they are colleagues in ministry. They critique each other's sermons and discuss problems and situations that arise out of a common vocation.

Despite the intervention of the snowstorm that hit the East Coast on January 6 and forced the postponement of Walker's ordination from January 8 to January 10 at St. Stephen's, Rollins was there to read the Gospel. And when Rollins was ordained the following Saturday in New Orleans, Walker was there.

The next day was Sunday. As a newly ordained priest, it was Rollins' privilege to celebrate the Eucharist for the first time at the altar of Trinity Church. But he shared that

honor. The first time that either man celebrated the Holy Eucharist, Drew Rollins and Paul Walker did it together.

--Sarah R. Bartenstein is Executive for Communication in the Diocese of Virginia, and editor of the Virginia Episcopalian where this article originally appeared.

96-1430

Everglades reveal fragility of ecosystem and livelihoods

By Jerry Hames

(ENS) When Vice President Al Gore recently announced a \$1.5 billion project to restore natural water flow to the Everglades, members of Executive Council had a good idea of the issues involved.

At the conclusion of their February meeting in Miami council members visited Everglades National Park and heard Episcopal voices expressing opposing concerns.

For some residents of the Keys, a string of islands that stretches 150 miles southwest toward Cuba, Florida's environment is being threatened by "big sugar" and its fertilizers. However, for those in Clewiston, on Lake Okeechobee north of the Everglades, sugar is their livelihood.

Harold and Susan Nugent, who escorted council members on their tour, support a ministry to protect the environment, beaches, Key deer endangered by road traffic and native wild plants threatened by extinction.

The Everglades--a sheet of shallow fresh water about 50 to 75 miles wide that flows from Lake Okeechobee to Florida Bay--is threatened, they say, by years of drainage by sugar cane farmers, from farm runoffs and pesticides.

Fragility and interdependence

On the other hand, the Rev. James Towner of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Clewiston said many of his parishioners who work for sugar growers depend on the industry for their livelihood, but are also pro-environment. Farmers are containing their fertilizers and have developed many environmentally compatible nutrients, Towner said.

Council members who toured the Everglades said they discovered the fragility and interdependence of the plant, animal and marine life. They saw alligators, ospreys and great egrets, the "river of grass" and groves of mangrove trees that have adapted themselves to grow in either fresh or salt water.

Bishop Calvin Schofield of the Diocese of Southeast Florida, said he proposed the trip because he thought that council members, who had seen Hispanic ministries, homeless

shelters and soup kitchens in other dioceses, would benefit from learning about his diocese's environmental ministry.

The broader picture

"We received information on how delicate the ecosystem is, how we are supposed to be stewards of God's creation," said the Rev. Fran Toy of Oakland, Calif. "We've not been very good stewards. "Dean Earl Cavanaugh of Kansas City, Mo., agreed. "We saw how all the life forms dovetail ... it's a powerful thing."

Council members also discovered that Episcopalians have divergent views. "Shaming and blaming doesn't help," said the Rev. Frederick J. Masterman, chair of the diocesan environmental committee. "You have to watch the broader picture."

Shortly after council's visit, Gore announced the seven-year initiative at the national park to restore the Everglades' natural water flow. Some funds would come from a reduction in the 18-cents-per-pound subsidy now paid to sugar cane workers in the area.

--Jerry Hames is editor of Episcopal Life, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church.

96-1431

Virginia churches offer mirror to racism with film on 'The Color of Fear'

by Nan Cobbey

(ENS) "White people don't talk about themselves as white people, they talk about themselves as human beings as if it's the same thing." The black speaker, angry and intense, stared across the room.

The white man's eyes were wide, uncomprehending. He pressed back into his seat, leaning away from the heat. "We don't think of ourselves as part of a group, an ethnic group," he said.

"Do you know that that *means* something?" The voice had an edge to it, frustrated, exasperated. He had clearly had to say this before. "We live with two different consciousness. I have to understand yours to survive. You don't have to know anything of mine."

It was not an easy conversation, even watching it on film in a comfortable auditorium. However, 1,200 people, black and white in about equal numbers, sat in the Cecil D. Hylton Memorial Chapel in Woodbridge, Virginia, on February 10 and watched for 90 minutes. They saw eight men--two Latino Americans, two African-Americans, two Asian-Americans and two white Americans--try to communicate about racism.

On screen, some broke down and cried. Others, furious and frustrated, shouted, squirmed and came close to losing all patience. One white man, shocked and hurt that anyone should believe him guilty of racism, bore the anger of the others, refused to flee and finally learned a severe lesson about himself. The audience learned it right along with him.

'The Lord was calling us'

The film, "The Color of Fear," is the work of California filmmaker and therapist Lee Mun Wah, a Chinese-American. He made it after his mother was murdered by an African-American man. It was to be an antidote to the racism he felt emerging in his own family.

The film's footage, all shot on one three-day retreat in Mendocino County, Calif., follows the self-revelations and interactions of the men, some of them known to Wah, all of them chosen for their honesty and openness. The power of the film has been widely recognized: Executive Council members saw the film during their recent meeting in Miami, and the House of Bishops made it a key element in their discussion about racism at their spring retreat at Kanuga Conference Center.

The audience in Woodbridge was a suburban Washington crowd who had come at the behest of their churches, their children's schools, their own consciences. They knew that there was work to be done and that this was a start. The Rev. Sarah Chandler of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Woodbridge, had given them this start.

Chandler had been trying to find a way to address racial tensions surfacing in Prince William County. The year before, a series of ugly incidents had strained relations in the county, which is 83 percent white, 12 percent black. Racist symbols adopted by a high school sports team and others spray-painted or burned onto buildings and lawns had prompted school officials to appeal to the county's churches for help.

A parishioner told her about the film that probed just the issues the county needed to face. Together with the Rev. Luke Torian, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, a black congregation in nearby Dumfries, Chandler solicited the local clergy association, school system and county government. Their event quickly became a countywide happening.

They rented the hall and hired a facilitator, Linda Compton from Stir Fry Productions, the company owned and run by the film's producer. They lined up a staff and volunteers. In all, they spent \$8,000. "I just haven't worried about cost," said Chandler. "The Lord was calling us to do it."

Now she and Torian are planning more ways churches in the region can work together. Their two churches are planning joint evangelical missions this summer, she said.

An antidote to racism

Honesty was the goal as the eight men on screen confronted each other, and some of their truths hurt:

■ A young African-American explains how difficult it is to be black in corporate America. "Show that you have some pride, have some intelligence, you scare people. You have to shuffle. It's a 1990s shuffle, but it's a shuffle."

■ A Mexican-American, unsuccessfully trying to control his emotions, said, "We were the first Americans. We were already here. But now we are not recognized as standard American." His voice breaks, then rises, "I've been robbed of that."

■ A Chinese-American, thanking others for speaking about an anger about racism he was taught "never to express," admitted, "I have always wanted to express it because ... it is killing me as I believe it killed my father."

■ A white American, innocently oblivious, faces sharp verbal pummeling. When finally he "gets it," he weeps. "I know that when you tell me your experiences I minimize them. ... We [white men] are not aware what a problem we are to you ... it disturbs me to know that you consider me ..." He cannot finish his sentence. He gasps for breath, his face streaked with tears.

The man's vulnerability and his willingness to stay with the confrontation until he finally hears what he had been denying gives the film much of its power. His awakening is his redemption and it becomes somehow the audience's redemption. His learning gives hope.

'Please stand if ever ...'

Many in the audience experienced all the emotions portrayed, just watching. When the lights finally came up, Compton led her listeners through a series of exercises to help them recognize the stereotypes our culture inflicts.

"Please stand if you've ever been followed around a store."

"Please stand if police have ever abused your rights."

"Please stand if women clutch their purses as you walk by."

"Please stand if people have ever left an elevator when you got on."

Hundreds of blacks rose repeatedly from their seats. All whites sat stone still.

As the audience followed Compton's direction to talk to "someone who doesn't look like you" about reactions to the film, a common question was "What now?"

As Mack Johnson, a black man from the Assembly of God, said to Leigh Gillette, a white man from All Saints Episcopal Church, "I thought the film was real good, but now we must say in our community, 'What are we going to do with it?' Even in your church, even in my church."

—Nan Cobbey is features editor for Episcopal Life, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church.

96-1432

Stopfel, partner put human faces on 'impersonal' Walter Righter case

by Jerry Hames

(ENS) When, by a narrow margin, the House of Bishops in 1990 rebuked Bishop John Spong for ordaining a non-celibate gay man in the Diocese of Newark, it almost caused another gay ordinand to abandon his hopes for the priesthood.

"I wasn't sure I was willing to make myself so vulnerable to be this test case," recalled the Rev. Barry Stopfel on the eve of the presentment hearing against Bishop Walter Righter, who ordained him a deacon. "My first response was, 'I'm not cut out for this. This is not my call, I'm not a political person.'"

It was Will Leckie, Stopfel's partner for the past 11 years, who encouraged him not to quit. "He was the one who just wouldn't let me do that," said Stopfel.

In the spotlight

Before the presentment, the glare of publicity that surrounded Stopfel's ordination on September 30, 1990, had long since abated. For the past three years Stopfel has worked quietly, ministering to the 325 members of St. George's Episcopal Church in Maplewood, New Jersey. Now, in the days leading up to the court hearing, he found himself reluctantly back in the spotlight again.

"Yes, it would have been far easier to stay home," Stopfel admitted. "Easier to say that it's not about me; it's about Walter [Righter], and stay in Maplewood, and refuse to comment and just let [the trial] go its course."

Instead, Stopfel sat throughout the day-long court hearing and granted numerous interviews, Leckie always by his side.

"At first I was hesitant to make myself ... so visible," Stopfel said. "But more and more I thought: 'I want to put a face on this abstract concept. So Will and I just decided the price we were going to pay was to do that.'"

"We both agree that what's been so frustrating is the attempt by the presenters to keep it all so impersonal," he said. "I don't believe that anyone who manipulates power to their own advantage does that without being personal. Power is always gained on the back of someone."

Opportunity for witness

It was only after the call from St. George's in 1993, Stopfel said, that he first realized that the priesthood was his vocation. "That it [a call] would happen at all and that [it would come from] a suburban parish with a long history of stability and credibility ... was extraordinary," he said. "I laughed; Will cried."

As the court hearing approached, both Stopfel and Leckie have been subjected to hate mail and obscene telephone calls. But they have also fielded dozens of calls from people seeking counseling or support groups. "There are moments when we both see this as a tremendous opportunity for faith and for witness," said Stopfel. Particularly, added Leckie, "if you can do something that makes a difference for the next generation."

What future course the church will follow underlies the presentment, Stopfel believes. "It's a search for doctrinal purity. There seems to be a real lusting after concrete reality and clarity right now. That's really disturbing to me," he said.

"I think of all the work I am doing in the Clergy Leadership Project, which says that [successful] leadership ... is a leadership that can tolerate high degrees of ambiguity," he said. "The kind of leadership shown in this presentment does not do that. It doesn't seem visionary. I see it not as a faithful response, but a fearful one."

What cost unity?

But Leckie looks for a positive conclusion from the presentment and the ensuing debate. "I hope there will be generations of children in the church who, as adults in their own parishes, will insist: 'I want these doors wide open for everyone. I want a body of Christ that will include everybody.'"

Although Stopfel believes the issue will ultimately drive some people from the church, he said he does not believe in the alternative: unity at all costs. "To lose money, to lose bishops, to lose parishes, is not a terrible price to pay to save this church. I think we should not be afraid of that cost," he said.

"I don't think it's a terrible price to pay for the future of this church, in order for it to continue to be the church of dialogue, elasticity and resilience."

--Jerry Hames is editor of Episcopal Life, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church.

96-1433

Refugees from Bosnian war build new life in southern Ohio

by Charlie Rice

(ENS) The journey that brought the Issa family from Serbia to Christ Church, Dayton, transported them over more than geographic miles.

"I am a new person here," said Adnan Issa, who with his wife and three children was resettled in southern Ohio as a refugee from the Bosnian war. "You have given me a chance to be free."

The Issas are probably the only Muslim family that regularly attends Christ Church, but thanks to their new friends at that church and at St. Paul's in Dayton and Christ Church in Xenia, they are no longer in a refugee camp.

"Look, I came here as a refugee, but now I am like you," said Adnan with wonder in his voice. "You and I have the same rights. The United States is a dream, it is my dream. Truly, a dream country. Yes."

In the shadow of the Dayton accords

The new Issa family home in the Dayton suburb of Huber Heights is only a few miles from Wright Patterson Air Force Base where the Dayton peace agreement was hammered out, dividing war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina into separate ethnic regions.

"I think the people who came here to Dayton for the peace talks are the people who wanted the war," Issa said. "The hatred that caused the war has existed for thousands of years. It is like an illness, an epidemic. Hate has become genetic in the Balkans. As long as it exists the war will never really stop,"

In his youth, he said, "Muslim, Serb and Croat all lived together in Yugoslavia, and it was a very good country."

But the peace was contrived, he said. The Croats and Muslims had fought with each other for years before World War II.

"Then they were forced into a federation by the communists," he said. "People didn't want it, and the hate still existed. When communism broke up, some nationalists came in and stirred up the old problems. The hatred woke up in the people and nationalists got control of the government."

When friends turn on you

Issa is a medical doctor who speaks at least four languages. English is not his favorite, but he is now in an intensive language class. The rest of the family are just beginning to learn English, so Issa spoke for the family.

"You can accept it when a stranger does something bad to you, but when your

neighbor--your last good friends--turn on you, you can't accept it," he said. "When the war began, suddenly my neighbors all hated me without any reason. I didn't do anything wrong. I was not guilty of anything. I didn't hurt anybody. But suddenly, people hated me because I was not like them, because I had another religion."

He spoke wistfully of Banjaluka, their former home. "We had a very nice home, a good house, not so big, but for us it was everything. For us it was paradise," he said. But last August, "three soldiers came to our home. They were very big men and they had guns. They gave us only one day to get out."

Taking only what they could carry, Adnan, his wife, Suada, their son, Elvin, and newborn twin girls, Rima and Rula, left their home for the camp where they were assigned.

"Because of the war, it took three days to travel only 50 kilometers," he said, wincing at the memory. "We were lucky. It took some people three months. The first day we traveled on a bus for 10 minutes and then we had to wait a day."

At the camp, they were housed "like animals," he said. "We could not even look a guard in the eye. He would beat you. It was Nazism. We had three families, 12 people, in one very small room. No toilets. But we were luckier than some. We were in a building. Many people were in tents or outside in the snow."

Their luck held. Adnan was able to use his language skills to get a camp work permit translating documents from Bosnian to Arabic for a Saudi relief agency. He was paid one German mark for each hand-written page he translated.

Then one day the good news came that they had been "adopted" by an Episcopal church in the United States. By February 15, they had arrived in Ohio, facing a surprisingly new life.

An organizational miracle

"This whole thing has been a miracle," said the Rev. David Bane, pastor of Christ Church, Dayton. "We thought we had two months to get ready. We were going to set up a committee. All of a sudden we got two days notice. We hadn't even met them yet. The Holy Spirit went to work on this place."

Despite the short notice, the parishes have pitched in with vigor, said Bane. "Their house was a gift. They have a car, furniture and food," he said. "We're getting Adnan hooked up so he can get back into the medical profession. It's been absolutely unbelievable--no organization but God's."

The parish was matched with the Issas through the Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Office, said Barbara Barrett of Christ Church. Once a parish agrees to take a refugee from this organization, she said, passports, visas and green cards are automatically arranged by the State Department. "It's all done under the auspices of the United Nations High Command for Refugees," she said.

In contrast to his brutal expulsion from his home, "here I have only friends," Issa said. "People come to us and give us things with no reason. Expensive things, valuable

things. People love us with sincerity. Here I'm meeting only good people."

Would he like to return? "Never" he said. "I don't want to go home because I have no home but here. I have nothing there. It is very difficult to build your life twice. I don't do it the third time. Enough. The only thing I want to do is to forget the past, to forget everything. Enough."

Issa spoke of the future with excitement and determination. "I am a doctor. I am a man who will never give up. I want to be a doctor here, and I'll do it. By my job, and by my hard work I will give my children and my wife a good life. I like this country, I like these people. Yes. Now I can do anything."

--Charlie Rice is communications assistant for the Diocese of Southern Ohio. This article is reprinted with permission from *Interchange*, the diocesan newspaper.

96-1434

A Letter to the Church from the House of Bishops meeting in Kanuga, North Carolina, March 13, 1996

We your bishops, gathered at Kanuga for our annual lenten meeting, send you greetings in the name of the risen Christ. In his opening remarks our Presiding Bishop spoke of community as God's gift. "We do not create community. We live into it. Being community requires enormous self-discipline and a radical obedience to how God has acted in our lives. It requires a conversion and a breaking open of our hearts. It requires a giving up of the false comfort that any one of us has all the answers..."

His words provided the context in which we reflected on the proposed concordat between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its meaning in terms of the imperatives of the gospel. The call to enter into full communion with another church is a call to conversion and an opening of the heart, as well as a facing of the fact that obedience to the gospel requires giving up the comfort of remaining singular and apart. The concordat offers both of our churches an opportunity for conversion to a deeper living of the gospel and greater transparency in fulfilling Christ's continuing ministry of reconciliation and making all things new.

We also turned our attention to the continuing effects of the sin of racism upon our church and within our own House. Here too we experienced the call to conversion: conversion to a deeper awareness of racism's insidious, subtle and all permeating effects. "Unawareness," declares the Desert Tradition, "is the root of all evil." As part of growing

toward greater awareness, we were obliged to confront the reality of unearned white privilege. Here too we heard the unmistakable invitation to surrender a false comfort and enter into the freedom of the One who breaks down all walls of hostility and division. (Ephesians 3:14)

Against this same background of conversion, we considered the changing role of the bishop and the ways for episcopate -- the care of the church --to be exercised with greater service to the whole community of the baptized. The role and responsibilities of presiding bishop were also discussed, together with the need for an open and healthy process as we look ahead to the election by this House of a new Presiding Bishop in 1997.

Two of our evening sessions were given over to an informal exploring of such concerns as youth at risk, public witness, congregational development and models and visions for ministry. These occasions provided an opportunity for us to share our experiences, learn from one another and to celebrate what is being accomplished in so many of our dioceses.

We note with sadness that we were diminished by the absence of some of our brothers, those who were unable to attend and those who chose not to be present. We will be in personal contact with all active bishops who were not among us, so that they, and their dioceses, can share in the fruits of this gathering, and we may all move forward together carrying out the mission of the church: a mission which belongs to all of us who have been baptized into Christ and share in his eternal priesthood.

As our meeting concluded, we felt that the time together had been one of grace and deep blessing: the worship, the sharing with one another, the careful presentations, and the insights of our chaplains fed us deeply and strengthened us as we together, with you, the people of God we have been called to lead and serve, continue our lenten journey toward the cross and into Christ's glorious resurrection.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13) Amen.



reviews and resources

96-1435

"Color of Fear" documentary available to churches

(ENS) "The Color of Fear," a film presenting the brutally honest interchange among eight men of different races, is being used throughout the country as a tool to help combat racism, to get discussions and corrective actions started. The Executive Council saw it in February when it met in Miami. The House of Bishops saw it in March when it gathered at Kanuga. Both showings were facilitated by the Rev. Edward Rodman of the Diocese of Massachusetts and Prof. Peggy McIntosh of Wellesley College, author of "White Privilege." The presentations included personal stories of race privilege and "unearned advantage," lack of privilege and "undeserved disadvantage," directed discussions and reflection. Rodman and McIntosh believe the film must be "framed" by such analysis, discussion and reflection if people seeing it are to feel supported and learn from it. Churches interested in scheduling a showing of the film and arranging for facilitation may contact Stir Fry Productions at 510-419-3930 or call Rodman at 617-482-4826, ext. 401.

ATR to publish issue on Anglican-Roman Catholic relations

(ENS) The winter 1996 issue of the *Anglican Theological Review* (ATR) will contain the major papers delivered at the 1995 conference on the condemnation 100 years ago of Anglican Orders by Pope Leo XIII in the apostolic letter, *Apostolicae Curae*. The Anglican and Roman Catholic participants in the conference, held at the General Theological Seminary in the spring of 1995 analyzed the theological and historical questions raised by the apostolic letter, which declared Anglican Orders to be "absolutely null and void," and their significance for the present and future relations between the two churches. Among the work contained in the issue is a forward by Bishop Hugh Montefiore, retired of Birmingham, an essay on Anglican theology of holy orders by Bishop Stephen Sykes of Ely, and a final commentary by Bishop Frank Griswold of Chicago. For more information, write to *Anglican Theological Review*, 600 Haven Street, Evanston, IL 60201, or telephone (847) 864-6024.

Evangelism materials available from Episcopal Church

(ENS) The Episcopal Church Center is distributing a packet of materials from Religion in American Life, outlining their 1996 *Invite a Friend* campaign. In a letter accompanying the materials, the Rev. Linda Strohmier, evangelism coordinator for the Episcopal Church, said that the campaign "offers you a wonderful opportunity to continue the Episcopal Church's historic commitment to ecumenical outreach, by working with the other

churches in your community to share in planning and developing this campaign in your own hometown. The materials include resources to help "your congregation overcome the traditional Anglican reticence toward evangelism" as well as information about the national advertising that will accompany the campaign. "Most important, though, *Invite a Friend* is, at its heart, a program that helps each member become caringly and personally involved in inviting a friend to share in the welcoming life of your congregation" For more information, call the office of the evangelism coordinator at the Episcopal Church Center, (212) 922-5337.

Photos available with this issue of ENS:

1. Episcopal groups protest restrictive immigration bills (96-1422)
2. For new priests, friendship endures tragedy (96-1429)
3. Priest at center of controversy puts human face on issue (96-1432)
4. Muslim refugees from Serbia find new life in Dayton (96-1433)

Tentative dates for upcoming issues of ENS are April 18 and May 2.

